



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

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DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**City of Benton Harbor WIC clients will be provided  
ready-to-feed formula following USDA approval**  
*Local partnerships create additional weekend water distribution sites*

LANSING, Mich. - To protect Benton Harbor's youngest residents and prevent lead exposure, the Michigan WIC program will begin providing ready-to-feed formula to Benton Harbor WIC clients, announced the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) today. A request was approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA), to provide the formula that does not require mixing with water to eligible WIC clients.

Ready-to-feed formulas would be redeemed like current formula benefits, using the WIC EBT card at authorized WIC vendors. Clients will be contacted by text messages or a call from the Michigan WIC office.

"We appreciate the rapid approval by the USDA to provide ready-to-feed bottled formula which will greatly assist parents to ensure their babies are receiving proper nutrition as quickly and easily as possible during this challenging time," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. "Many thanks to the Berrien County Health Department and our local MDHHS Berrien County Office who are working hard to prepare and notify their local clients."

In addition, more sites for free bottled water were announced today as partnerships with local community and faith-based organizations continue to expand throughout the City of Benton Harbor. Free bottled water is being offered out of an abundance of caution and residents are being encouraged to use bottled water for cooking, drinking, brushing teeth, rinsing foods and mixing powdered infant formula.

MDHHS is engaging in a long-term effort to eliminate lead action level exceedances, educate communities on the effects of lead in drinking water, and remove lead service lines.

Distribution is at the following locations and times:

**Friday, Oct. 15**

- God's Household of Faith, 275 Pipestone Street, Benton Harbor
  - 2 – 6 p.m.

333 SOUTH GRAND AVENUE • PO BOX 30195 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
[www.michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs) • 517-241-3740

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**Saturday, Oct. 16**

- Family Dollar, 481 Pipestone Street, Benton Harbor
  - 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, 1105 East Main Street, Benton Harbor
  - 12 – 2 p.m.

**Sunday, Oct. 17**

- Fairplain Presbyterian Church, 210 W Napier Avenue, Benton Harbor
  - 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Abundant Life Church of God, 693 Columbus Avenue, Benton Harbor
  - 3 – 6 p.m.

**Monday, Oct. 18**

- Abundant Life Church of God, 693 Columbus Avenue, Benton Harbor
  - 11 – 1 p.m.

**Tuesday, Oct. 19**

- Abundant Life Church of God, 693 Columbus Avenue, Benton Harbor
  - 11 – 1 p.m.

Additional dates and locations for bottled water pick up will be added to make sure community needs are met. Information will be posted on [Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe](https://Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe).

Efforts to support homebound residents and residents without transportation are also underway in addition to the water distribution sites. To arrange water delivery to homebound or residents without transportation in the City of Benton Harbor, please contact 211 which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For questions about lead, MDHHS can be reached at 866-691-5323 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This action is part of an accelerated, across-the-board effort to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water while the city replaces all lead service lines. This collaborative effort includes the City of Benton Harbor, the Berrien County Health Department, local community organizations, MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

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